



## MEMORANDUM

File Codes: 3000, 1580

To: State Foresters

Regional Foresters, Area Director, IITF Director, S&PF Leadership, and S&PF Grants and Agreements Staff

Date: 05/03/2011

Re: Suggested Format for Non-competitive S&PF Grant Narratives

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Last spring, the Redesign Implementation Council (now the State & Private Forestry Board) charged a small work group of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and state forestry agency employees to develop a simple, flexible, and standard format for non-competitive grant narrative(s) that would incorporate Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies.

On December 6, 2010, the S&PF Board approved the standardized format, available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/index.shtml>, to beta test nationally in FY2011. To support the Application for Federal Assistance, SF-424, state forestry agencies are requested to use the new format, beginning this year, for all non-competitive (sometimes referred to as “core”) S&PF grant narratives. These include single S&PF Program and Consolidated Payment Grant narratives. The Forest Legacy Program is exempt from this format and will continue to be administered under existing policies and procedures.

The new narrative format was not specifically designed for S&PF competitive, or “Redesign,” projects, but can be used for those grant narratives. Please defer to USFS S&PF regional direction regarding the grant narrative format for competitively-funded projects. This format may also be used for grants to other organizations (e.g., RC&D Councils and nonprofit organizations).

Users will find that this grant narrative format has several elements that meet the S&PF Board’s directive for simplicity, flexibility, and standardization:

- It uses the most essential narrative elements commonly found in previous grant narratives.
- Instructions are incorporated in the documents to help users correctly enter information. The instructions are shaded in grey and can be deleted as the narrative is completed.
- The new format can be used for either a single S&PF Program grant or a Consolidated Payment Grant narrative. Project and core program activities can be integrated into one grant narrative. It also accommodates lumping or splitting of work components for narrative description based on local preference and regional guidance.
- The standard structure in this format allows states and regions flexibility, while maintaining consistency across basic S&PF grant narrative elements.

A complete grant narrative that uses this format is composed of a *Grant Narrative Summary* and one or more *Program/Project Grant Narrative(s)*. States will submit the complete narrative along with the SF-424, SF-424A, and other required certificates and assurances. Please refer to the USFS regional financial advice and grant specialists for complete grant application requirements and instructions.

S&PF Program authorities, example Program activities, and reporting requirements will be provided soon in a *National S&PF Program Authorities and Guidance* document. Along with supplemental regional program direction, this document will provide text for pasting into the *Program/Project Grant Narrative(s)*. A sample grant narrative following this new format is also posted at <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/index.shtml> for reference, and will be updated when the *National S&PF Program Authorities and Guidance* document is finalized.

The ***Grant Narrative Summary*** serves as a table of contents for the complete grant narrative. It provides an overview of the work components and S&PF Programs included in the grant. It also summarizes funds requested for each work component and each S&PF Program.

The ***Program/Project Grant Narrative*** contains information specific to an individual work component, which may be an integrated project, a S&PF Program-specific project, or core S&PF Program activities. A *Program/Project Grant Narrative* is completed for each project and each S&PF Program included in the grant.

Statewide Forest Resource Strategies are incorporated in the *Program/Project Grant Narrative* under the “Purpose” section. For simplicity, a succinct reference to these documents is encouraged rather than extensive repetition of text. Noting the date and version of the State Strategy is important since strategies may be updated over time.

On a final note, the USFS will schedule training opportunities to help state forestry agencies prepare to use the new grant narrative format. USFS staff on the team that developed the new format are available to assist each USFS Region, IITF, and the Northeastern Area to help communicate and provide training to state forestry agencies. Regional-level training is also an opportunity to provide any regional direction or guidance regarding state grant applications. The S&PF Board considers use of the national grant narrative format a beta test this fiscal year. Input from State and federal staff on the format is needed for further refinement of the documents. The S&PF Board will consider users’ input to refine the format for FY2012 and beyond. The hope is that as grant narratives and the Assessments and Strategies become more intertwined, the format will adapt and change to best serve the needs of both grantee and grantor, aiming for a streamlined and simple process. Please submit your comments to [spf-grant-narrative@fs.fed.us](mailto:spf-grant-narrative@fs.fed.us).

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Enclosures